



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

July 27, 2006

For immediate release

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ANHYDROUS AMMONIA LEAK IN HARRISON COUNTY SMALLER THAN ORIGINALLY THOUGHT

MISSOURI VALLEY — An anhydrous ammonia spill at Farm Services Company in Missouri Valley appears to be smaller than originally reported.

On Wednesday, the company reported to the DNR that approximately 56,000 to 64,000 gallons of anhydrous ammonia was missing from its inventory. The company speculated that the anhydrous ammonia, stored in an above-ground tank, seeped out of the tank's underground piping. Upon further investigation Thursday, the company is estimating the loss at 100 gallons, if a leak actually occurred. Anhydrous ammonia is a common farm chemical.

Because of the potential threat to groundwater from such a large release, the DNR had originally planned to test private drinking water wells located within a mile radius of the release. Now, the DNR will test the well at Farm Services Company and another nearby well. The DNR will not sample the other wells unless it has been verified that an actual release of anhydrous ammonia occurred.

The company is excavating near the underground piping to determine if a release did happen.

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IOWA JOINS OTHER MIDWESTERN STATES IN DEVELOPING ELECTRONIC WASTE REGIONAL POLICY

DES MOINES - After nearly 10 months of dialog and meetings, the Midwest Regional Electronic Waste Policy Initiative has issued its policy statement to ensure environmentally sound and cost effective management of electronic wastes or “e-wastes.”

The lack of easy access to environmentally sound recycling options has concerned communities faced with the sheer volume of computers, televisions and other electronic products currently being thrown away. The Midwest policy has the official support of four state environmental agencies— Michigan, Iowa, Illinois and Wisconsin—with endorsement expected shortly from Minnesota.

“A regional approach to electronic waste management will reduce the likelihood that one state’s policies will have a detrimental impact on neighboring states,” said Matt Hale, director of the office of solid waste at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

Environmental agency staff worked with stakeholders representing industry, environmental groups, recyclers and other interested parties to develop policy guidelines that Midwest states can use to draft consistent electronic waste management legislation.

Currently, legislation has been developed in California, Maine, Maryland and Washington for recycling e-waste, but each state’s laws have unique requirements.

“By creating one approach to e-waste management across the Midwest, industry, governments and consumers will have fewer rules and regulations to understand and comply with,” said Theresa Stiner, environmental specialist with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources. “We hope to increase the effectiveness of e-waste recycling by continuing our partnerships with these other states in administering a regional e-waste program.”

The Midwest policy calls for manufacturer responsibility in the collection, transportation and recycling of electronic products based on the manufacturer’s sales in the state. Manufacturers who do not have or choose not to have a recycling program for managing e-waste may meet their obligation by paying into a recycling fund. Retailers’ responsibilities include reporting sales data to manufacturers, and only selling products of manufacturers that are in compliance. The Midwest policy also includes a landfill disposal ban to be in place after two years.

The policy, letters of support from the state agencies and additional information is available at the Minnesota Product Stewardship Web site:

www.moea.state.mn.us/stewardship/electronicsmidwest.cfm.

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WATERSHED QUALITY PLANNING TASK FORCE TO HOLD FIRST MEETING; OPEN TO PUBLIC

WEST DES MOINES — The first meeting of a committee appointed to discuss a voluntary statewide water quality program has been set for Thursday, Aug. 3, from 10 a.m. to noon in West Des Moines.

The Watershed Quality Planning Task Force will meet at the West Des Moines Public Library, 4000 Mills Civic Parkway.

“The recommendations of this task force will be additional steps in helping Iowans work for cleaner water,” said Wayne Gieselmann, head of DNR environmental services. “I expect that the results of this committee will better enable individual Iowans to make changes that benefit the whole state by improving water quality.”

The Iowa Legislature called for creation of the committee during the last session. Specifically, the legislature is asking the committee to develop a report containing recommendations on the following issues:

- Improving water quality
- Creating economic incentives for environmental compliance
- Facilitating implementation efforts
- Developing quantifiable protocols and procedures
- Providing greater flexibility through community-based, non-regulatory, performance-driven watershed management planning.

The committee is comprised of representatives from both houses and both parties of the Legislature, Iowa Association of Municipal Utilities, Iowa League of Cities, Iowa Association of Business and Industry, Iowa Water Pollution Control Association, Iowa Rural Water Association, Growing Green Communities, Iowa Environmental Council, Iowa Farm Bureau, Iowa Corn Growers Association, Iowa Soybean Association, Iowa Pork Producers Association, Soil and Water Conservation Districts of Iowa, Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship, Iowa Department of Natural Resources and the Iowa Conservation Alliance.

The committee meeting is open to the public.

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NEW GEOLOGIC MAPS AVAILABLE FROM DNR GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

IOWA CITY — The DNR Geological Survey is introducing new geologic maps for several parts of the state that can help assess water quality and facility sites.

Geologic maps show the distribution of rock types, glacial deposits and materials placed by water and wind. These various materials have different abilities to drain, produce and transmit water. The materials also range in engineering properties and have varying suitability for many applications.

The new maps include near-surface geology for Hardin County, and more detailed mapping for portions of Winneshiek and Cedar counties. In addition, the DNR also completed detailed mapping of the bedrock geology for the Yellow River watershed and nearby areas in Winneshiek and Allamakee counties. A watershed is an area of land that drains into a stream or lake.

Geologic maps have wide applications. They include identifying potential quarry and sand pit locations, identifying areas to find suitable fill dirt, assessing groundwater supply and quality, protecting groundwater and wells from contamination, proper design and siting of waste facilities, road construction and a host of others. The newly-released maps, and geologic maps for many parts of the state, are available on the DNR Iowa Geological Survey Web site at www.igsb.uiowa.edu.

The Hardin County mapping is part of a long-term project to map Iowa's youngest landscape, the Des Moines glacial lobe. This landform region, which contains the state's richest agricultural lands, covers the north-central part of Iowa. To date, more than half of the Des Moines Lobe area has been mapped. These mapping efforts can be helpful to ongoing projects to improve water quality in Hardin County.

The mapping in Cedar County was carried out in tandem with the Natural Resources Conservation Service update of the Cedar County Soil Survey. Maps of the near-surface geology are a natural compliment to soil survey maps. Taken together they provide a comprehensive view of the near-surface earth materials on which society works and lives.

Winneshiek, Allamakee, and other eastern Iowa counties are characterized by shallow, fractured bedrock aquifers. These aquifers contain varying numbers of karst features, such as sinkholes, losing streams and springs. Groundwater in these areas is very susceptible to contamination, and often moves quickly to wells and streams. Detailed mapping of the bedrock is critical for understanding how and where groundwater enters aquifers and moves to streams such as the Yellow and Upper Iowa Rivers, which are on the state's list of impaired waters.

For more information on geologic maps and Iowa's geologic and water resources, contact Bob Libra, State Geologist, DNR-Iowa Geological Survey, (319) 335-1575.

MEDIA CONTACT: Bob Libra, State Geologist, (319) 335-1575.

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FAIRFIELD, BURLINGTON BYPASS WASTEWATER FOLLOWING STORMS

DES MOINES — Following heavy rainfall overnight, the cities of Fairfield and Burlington both reported wastewater bypasses at their facilities on Wednesday.

In Fairfield, approximately 16,000 gallons of wastewater bypassed to unnamed streams, including one known locally as Indian Creek. The bypasses began around 6:30 a.m. and ended by 8:45 a.m. Wednesday. The city reported that no bypasses occurred in Jefferson County Park or other areas exposed to pedestrian traffic.

The City of Burlington bypassed approximately 172,000 gallons of wastewater to the Mississippi River. City employees inspected the sewer system after a heavy rainfall and discovered the bypass at 7 a.m. Wednesday. The bypass stopped around 10:45 a.m.

Both cities are undergoing improvements to their sewer systems.

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